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ABSTRACT

This booklet is one of a series of teacher-written curriculum publications launched by the Bay Area Writing Project, each focusing on a different aspect of the teaching of composition. The purpose of the booklet is to help teachers, parents, and students understand the provisions of contract independent study and how to start an independent study program. The first section defines contract independent study and outlines ways to implement it. The second section provides examples of high school level independent study contracts that are community based, classroom based, based on special interests, designed for "turned off" students, and based on practical experience. The third section describes elementary school contracts for both nonattending and regularly attending students. The fourth and fifth sections explain how writing and basic competency needs can be met through independent study contracts. The last section offers examples of district program guidelines for independent study and samples of individual student contracts. (AEA)

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Independent Study and Writing

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Foreword

The passage of California Senate Bill 1501 in 1976 permits school districts to operate contract independent study programs in grades kindergarten through 12. Under contract independent study, students can pursue educational activities not only within the confines of the school campus and regular class hours but off-campus and outside school hours as well. Contract independent study addresses learning as a process occurring in many places, at a variety of times, under the supervision of volunteers as well as school staff.

The purpose of this booklet is to help teachers, parents and students understand the provisions of contract independent study and how to start an independent study program.

This booklet was written jointly by the California High School Independent Study Project and the Bay Area Writing Project.

We believe that writing and contract independent study can work hand in hand in a well designed educational program. Writing becomes important, regardless of the learning focus of the independent study activity, as a way for students to integrate the learning that has taken place for them and as a way of communicating their experiences to their instructors. The type and amount of writing will vary depending on the student and the educational objectives specified in the contract. Likewise, for teachers of writing and their students, independent study can be an excellent way of providing program flexibility for designing writing experiences and instructional support appropriate for each student.

Whether you are a teacher, parent, student, or interested member of the community, we hope this booklet—a cookbook for creating independent study programs that use writing skills—will assist you. We would like to know how you are able to use this book and what experiences you have with writing and independent study. Let us hear from you.

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Introduction

Consider these individuals:

- An enthusiast so swept away by a particular poet that moving on with the rest of the class to another author is distasteful.
- A "turned off" student who sees no relation between schooling and "real life."
- A child fascinated by film but bored by books.
- A child of seasonal workers who misses four months of school.
- A "bright" child who is often truant or disruptive in class.
- A methodical child whose work in class suffers because the normal activities of 30 children in one room continually distract his/her attention.
- A teen-ager who is uncomfortable with children of the same age, but who is gentle and skillful at organizing younger children's games.
- A child from a low-income family who stays home to help while a parent recovers from an illness.
- A child from a wealthy family taken out of school for a month-long vacation in Europe.
- A child who is struggling to meet basic competency requirements.
- A child who is far ahead of classmates in the most advanced course available in the regular curriculum.

These are "special cases," but every teacher knows special cases are not rare. For these and other students, the ordinary curriculum or the regular school schedule may be restrictive or demoralizing.

Independent study programs permit districts to respond flexibly to the needs of individual students and to challenge students to excel in areas of special interest and ability.

I.

Contract Independent Study

WHAT IT MEANS

California law defines independent study as "an alternative to a regular classroom program of instruction." Some basic provisions are:

- Students may work individually or in groups.
- Students need not be in attendance on campus for the statutory minimum day. Districts may include in their attendance count, and receive ADA for, students who are learning off campus.
- Teachers may exercise "general supervision" instead of the "immediate supervision and control" previously required by law. Hence, para-professionals or volunteers with special skills may be used to supervise students in independent study programs.
- School districts are permitted to establish independent study programs in all grades from kindergarten through 12.

The heart of an independent study program is the *contract*. This is a written agreement signed by the student, a parent or guardian, and the district certificated staff member who will supervise the student's project. If a non-staff person plans to assist the student, that person also signs.

The contract specifies the student's objectives, the manner in which the objectives will be evaluated, and the manner, time, and place for reporting progress.

For students, independent study could mean participation in one or more of the following general categories of learning:

- Doing special assignments in one or more regular courses and being excused from classes if necessary to work on these assignments.
- Taking classes in subjects which are not offered as part of the regular curriculum. These might be academic subjects like oceanography, modern art and economics, or such non-academic subjects as bicycle repair, weaving and wilderness survival. The classes could be taught by a regular teacher, by someone outside the school, or even by a student. The classes might be attended by several students or could be taken on an individual basis.
- Taking a job during regular school hours, for pay or as a community volunteer, if the work has educational value.
- Starting a student managed enterprise or a community service project.
- Participation in domestic and foreign student exchange programs or self-directed study during travel.

Appropriate environments for learning under independent study can include:

- Businesses
- Libraries
- Museums
- Community service agencies
- Neighborhood centers
- Government agencies
- Farms
- Family residences
- Media facilities
- Colleges and universities

Particular examples of independent study activities are described in the following sections on contract learning in the high school and the elementary school.

There are two laws which make it possible for California school districts to broaden the choices open to students and to call upon community resources in all educational programs, including language arts programs.

Senator Gregorio's Independent Study Act authorizes districts to give credit for programs outside of school and not under the direct supervision of a teacher. (Further information may be obtained from John Harter, Independent Study Programs, c/o Bay Area Writing Project, 5635 Tolman Hall, University of California, Berkeley, 94720.)

The School Improvement Act provides planning and implementation grants for school site improvement programs designed by councils chosen equally from school staff and community members. The Act encourages creation of a "range of alternatives in instructional settings and formats" to carry out the RISE Commission's view that "society itself is the core of schooling." (Further information is available from Kenneth Lane, CATE Legislative Chair, Tolman Hall, University of California, Berkeley, 94720.)

IMPLEMENTING INDEPENDENT STUDY

As a first step to implementing independent study programs, the local school board must adopt written policies and procedures. It may be best for an advisory committee of teachers, students and parents to write the district policy and establish broad guidelines for the program's operation. This group can then serve to review and evaluate the program as it proceeds.

Because teachers, counselors and administrators may all act as general supervisors of independent study, and because the supervisor is the key to success, it is important to include teachers and other staff in planning and evaluation of the contract learning program.

Usually, one person is designated as district coordinator for independent study. This person may be a teacher or an administrator. A district coordinator can provide overall direction of the program, propagate knowledge of the program to students and staff, mediate any disputes over contracts and credits, and take responsibility for record keeping.

An independent study coordinator may also be designated for each school. Again, a teacher, counselor or administrator may assume this role. Acting in this capacity should be recognized as part of the teaching or administrative

load. Some districts, e.g. Los Angeles, pay teachers who serve as coordinators much as drama or athletic coaches are paid for their additional time and effort.

In addition to individual meetings with supervising teachers or coordinators, independent study students may be placed together in a class which meets occasionally (perhaps once a week) to teach skills which are needed for all independent study—for example, how to keep a journal, or how to evaluate one's own progress.

A file should be kept of previous independent study projects, sample contracts, and a list of community agencies and individuals who will work with students or who provide places for students to carry out their projects.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers from the community may be used in independent study programs to help supervise students off campus, and to serve as instructors on or off campus. They may also assist with administration, such as record keeping, and in recruiting other volunteers.

Volunteers can make important contributions to independent study. However, supervisors must realize that using volunteers is not trouble-free. Recruiting and coordinating volunteers demands time and effort. Not all volunteers will have the background necessary for the jobs they wish to do or are most needed for. If they are to be trained, time and money must be invested. Some volunteers, because they are giving their time, may not have the same commitment to their jobs as paid staff would have.

Yet, of course, some volunteers will be highly dependable and can become valuable resources. Retired professionals, including retired teachers, are often willing to commit their time, and may have useful experience to share. Para-professionals can also be effective in independent study programs, particularly in assisting teachers and administrators to supervise students.

MAKING IT WORK

Teachers have reported that an important factor in successful programs is "an honors attitude." That is, it must be made clear to students that they are expected to perform their *best* work while under contract. Otherwise there is a danger that students will see independent study as an easy out from classes and assignments. An honors attitude can be encouraged by allowing students to participate fully in developing both the project they will undertake and the methods of evaluating their work.

Projects should be carefully structured. A student confronting a large, open-ended project may feel overwhelmed. A set of small, related tasks will be more manageable, and the completion of each stage gives a sense of accomplishment. If each task is allotted a fairly short period, such as a week, both student and supervisor will be able to discover difficulties with which the student needs help.

Structure is also important for on-going evaluation and the assigning of credits or grades at the end of the project. Careful drafting of the independent study contract and regular scheduling of reports on completed work will permit both student and supervisor to assess the student's progress. Students should be encouraged to point out their own achievements and shortcomings.

For some students, traditional A-F grading may be effective. For others, non-traditional evaluation may be more useful.

Detailed record-keeping is important for successful independent study programs. Students and supervisors need to know just what work has been completed and what remains to be done. Furthermore, when students are off campus, the school needs to know where they are. Students should report to a single person or office when they leave campus and return. These simple arrangements, carefully adhered to, can give students a sense of direction and accountability that will help make independent study a productive and satisfying experience.

II.

Independent Study in the High School

COMMUNITY BASED

A school district may wish to establish a new course, e.g. Independent Study-English, or Independent Study-Science, allowing a teacher to take charge of a class of individuals carrying out separate but related projects.

This approach is particularly suitable for projects in which students go out into the community. Such activities require preparation—selection of community sites, initial contact with potential cooperating businesses and individuals—which is often best done by the teacher responsible for the class. Students may require access to telephones and typewriters and assistance in making travel arrangements. A teacher may be needed to serve as a reference and answer questions from persons students wish to interview.

The program for a community-based Independent Study-English class described below was drawn up by Miles Myers based on his experience with the All-City High School Project in Oakland. Sixteen months were devoted to planning, and two months were spent on a pilot project during the summer. The exphasis of the program is on writing, although other forms of expression are noted.

The Community and the English Class

The walls of the classroom can impose limits on the teacher's search for new subjects and new audiences for students' writing. After class observations and interviews with the school librarian, where can students find subjects which engage them in personal discovery? After writing to the school secretary and principal, who but the teacher is available as an adult audience?

The outside community can provide the needed resources. And schools can help students reach these resources. Independent study programs like the All-City Project allow students to discover and address the adult audiences of their own communities in situations that demand communication skills for real-life purposes.

At the outset, each student negotiates a contract with the instructor. The agreements describe the students' schedules for periods varying from one to ten weeks. They include dates of appointments with the instructor, and deadlines for completion of intermediate phases and of the final project. The contracts list the people to be interviewed in the community, as well as one or two adults in the community who will read and evaluate the students' reports before they are submitted to the instructor. In some cases, additional

audiences are specified. For instance, a multi-media report could be presented before another class in the school.

The classroom needs to be equipped with at least one outside phone, twenty phone books, two dozen city and neighborhood maps, bus schedules, diagrams of a model business and of a government agency, posters showing coming community events, and a library of materials from community groups. The library will grow as students collect material during their projects.

After negotiating a contract, each student is given a letter of introduction, on the school's official letterhead, describing the student's project briefly and giving the phone number and address of the instructor. (Some people do check up. Occasionally they wonder if they are being investigated by a mysterious agency.)

The writing projects that students can undertake are as varied as the community in which the students live. The following are a few examples of projects which have been undertaken in the Bay Area.

The Courthouse

Each courthouse has a secretary who knows which cases are coming up and which judges are willing to have students in their courts. A friendly judge may stop to explain points of law to a student and allow the student to examine exhibits. A jury trial lasting two weeks could have the following sections:

Jury Selection—Write a letter to one person who was considered for the jury and explain to that person his/her acceptance or rejection.

Diagram—Prepare a diagram of the crime, showing site and location of participants and witnesses.

Attorney Interview—Interview the defense attorney and the attorney from the district attorney's office to determine the arguments on both sides. Include both notes and summary of the interview. The best time to conduct the interview is toward the end of the trial.

Final Argument—Present for the jury (whom you have watched in the court and know from the jury selection) your final argument, taking the position of either the district attorney or the defense attorney.

Decision—Write a brief report on the final disposition of the case. Indicate what witness or witnesses most influenced the decision, at least in your opinion.

Stock Broker

Stock brokers are very happy to meet with students, provide films on investing, whatever. The assignment usually has some variation of investment record and the brochure.

Investment Record—The student is given an old listing on the New York Stock Exchange and an example investment record sheet. The student is told that he/she has $100,000 which he/she must now invest in listing on the NYSE. The student makes two copies of the investment record, showing number of stocks of each type, purchase price (the price on the old listing), and so forth. Then the student is asked to keep a daily record for one week of what hap-

pens to the investments, turning in each day a record of sales, new purchases, and present status of the original $100,000 invested.

Brochure—At the end of the week, the student invents a name for the imaginary mutual fund and prepares a brochure for stockholders and new customers explaining the growth or decline in value of the original $100,000. Students are encouraged to use art work, are required to include the investment records from the week, and are given some example brochures to imitate.

Neighborhood Profile

The student is asked to select one block in the downtown area and prepare a profile of the block, including the following sections in the report:

Map—The map should show the location of each store or residence, the address, the names of the owners or operators, the name of the business or the name of the main family. In addition to the student's map of the block as it now is, the student could be asked to prepare copies of maps showing what the area was like in the past. The Oakland Museum, for example, has some old maps of the Oakland area. Another option is to require a topographical map of the area, available from the U.S. Geographical Survey, and still another option is an aerial photograph of the block, available from Customer Relations, EROS Data Center, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, 57198.

Interview—The student will interview at least one person at each address, submitting to the instructor both notes and a summary from the interview. The summary should describe the individual's recollection of the history of the area, his/her view of the present problems faced by the neighborhood, and his/her estimate of the neighborhood's special qualities. The student should send each person interviewed a follow-up letter thanking the individual for his/her time.

Property Values—The student prepares a property list showing the estimated value of each place in the block. The tax stamps in the county office will provide information on last purchase price and the records of the county assessor show recent tax estimates.

Profile—The student will write a profile of the neighborhood, using the maps, interviews, and property records as a resource. The profile should capture the "personality" of the area—its history, present problems, and commercial or residential function.

What to Do Brochure

The student selects one situation or problem which commonly confronts citizens in the community and prepares for citizens an information brochure on what to do. For example, what should one do if someone in the family dies? This problem requires a visit to a hospital, an insurance company, possibly the coroner's office, the social security agency, a mortician, and possibly an office of one of the armed services. In an accident case, the student will need to visit the local police department. The student will submit to the instructor examples of forms that must be completed, notes taken during the interviews, and the completed brochure. Again the student will be asked to send follow-up letters thanking agencies for their help. The

teachers should ask some students to tape-record their interviews because the tapes are very useful for classroom discussions to improve interviewing techniques. Other problems for which brochures could be prepared are a birth in the family, the arrest of a juvenile, a destructive earthquake or invasion from Mars, unemployment, running for public office, improving city services in your area, or a lost person report.

How It Works Brochure

This assignment is similar to the one above except in this instance the student is asked to explain to adults or peers how some private or public agency works. The brochure will be handed out by the public relations division of the agency (at least as an imaginary condition of the assignment). This assignment requires *diagrams* showing organizational structure, *maps* of the building, example *forms* used by the agency, and *interviews* of personnel in the various divisions. For an assignment of this type, requiring two weeks or more in a single place, the student should have an introductory letter from an official of the firm.

Opinion Surveys

The student prepares an opinion survey on some topic of interest to him/her, and after piloting the survey with a sample population, prepares a final draft for distribution. The student should present the surveys personally and, in fact, may ask for oral responses. The polls may be conducted with a cross-section of people or in a particular area. One possibility is to conduct a survey on BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit) trains. The train riders accept the polls from the students as a social event, and BART in the past has been willing to provide a letter of introduction on official stationery.

Other assignments include the TOUR GUIDE, planned tours of the city; the CONSUMER GUIDE, market-basket surveys around the city; JOB SURVEYS, including descriptions of available working conditions and salary ranges; ROOTS, showing the family tree, profiles of individuals, and possible family values as expressed in the family's choice of outcasts; FOLK TALE STUDIES, explaining the populace's various versions of the tooth fairy, Santa Claus, or the bogeyman.

All of the assignments introduce the students to their community and to the skills of note taking, interviewing, and composing for a variety of audiences. Much of the writing becomes a functional necessity, not merely an assignment. For example, most students will find that their interview schedules will work more smoothly if they make appointments by phone and follow-up with letters of confirmation. The editing often improves simply because some adult other than the teacher is going to read the essay. Finally most students discover that they never really knew their communities very well and that writing is a means of discovery, not just a means of communication.

The method of reporting credit for a course or program like All-City can be complex. The assignments offer the possibility of credit in at least three areas: English, social studies, and basic math. Specialized credit could be given for civics, United States Government, consumer affairs, advanced composition, and possibly basic art. The contracts of the students should

show the credit to be given and the emphasis of the assignment should be in the credit area. On any given assignment, a group of students might be earning credit in three or four different courses. In the court assignment, for example, one student might be earning art credit by drawing courtroom scenes and diagrams of the events being argued, another earning credit in U.S. Government by identifying the legal issues in the courtroom testimony, a third earning credit in advanced composition by interviewing observers and attorneys and writing profiles of people involved in the case, and a fourth earning credit in basic math by preparing a detailed chronology of events in the crime. Obviously a teacher can simplify his/her life by restricting credit to one or two courses.

CLASSROOM BASED

Instead of, or in addition to, establishing a new course, a school district may provide for independent study by individuals within existing classes. This approach may be particularly suitable for the "special case" student who wishes to pursue a personal interest or who needs to be freed from some of the requirements of an ordinary class.

Planning

Independent study does not mean casting students adrift. A critical factor in successful programs is careful planning.

Teachers must recognize that independent study will demand an investment of extra time. Even with the most mature and dependable students and the most knowledgeable teacher, an independent study project will require 1-2 hours of conferences to set up, and perhaps 10-15 minutes each week for the student to report progress, ask questions, raise problems or display completed assignments.

A teacher may minimize the weekly time expenditure or capitalize on it in some of the following ways:

- With a well-organized system for record-keeping, a student aide or community volunteer may check off work completed each week. The teacher can meet the student to deal with questions or problems and upon completion of final written work. If the student is doing a succession of assignments (e.g. a series of opinion polls, letters or interviews), these might be collected in a notebook for evaluation after several weeks.
- A peer accounting system could be established in which two independent study students take responsibility for reporting to each other and confirming that weekly deadlines are met. Peter Elbow, in *Students Without Teachers*, discusses ways in which students can respond to each other's writing.
- The independent study project can be related to what is going on in the regular class, so that the student reports on progress to the entire class or devises materials that can be used with the entire class. Students may become, in effect, assistant teachers, as in a cross-age project which brings in older students to work with younger ones.

Projects and activities should be designed to be easily evaluated and to require a minimum of extra supervision.

- At first, designate very specific assignments to be completed within one week—e.g., write one letter, or conduct a certain small number of interviews, or record a definite set of observations.

· Devise means by which students can express the generalized learning resulting from their experiences and social observations. Journals and diaries or observation sheets can be used to record thoughts and activities which may relate to the project only indirectly but which are an important aspect of the independent study experience.

It is important to schedule the on-campus activities of independent study students with care. If they attempt to work on their projects in the classroom, their activities may distract other students, or they may be disturbed by the classroom activities. If students are carrying out projects for one class in after-school hours, yet must be on campus for other classes, they need a place to work where they will not disrupt regular classes.

When the number of students pursuing independent study is small, they can do their written work in the library. When the number is large, a classroom may have to be set aside for their use. In any case, if a student must be on campus, it is best to plan in advance exactly what the student will do during the scheduled class time and where he will work.

It is also important to bear in mind the needs and feelings of students who are not involved in independent study. A full explanation of the requirements of independent study programs can prevent the rise of resentment over the "special treatment" of a few students. Projects which result in a report or display before the entire class give the independent study student an audience and show the class that the project was not simply a soft alternative to regular class work.

SPECIAL INTERESTS

Interest in a particular subject which lies outside the scope of the regular classroom activities can be satisfied in a variety of independent study project formats. One San Francisco student becoming fascinated with the personalities of Gertrude Stein and Isadora Duncan (as they were portrayed by Hollywood movies) decided to recreate the Bay Area environment as it existed in their respective childhoods. She worked through a regular English literature class, but she gathered information from a variety of sources including local museums and libraries, private photography and art collections, interviews with long-time residents, etc. Her final project was a presentation to several English classes using visuals, music (from the period), and portions of a tape recording of an interview with a 96-year-old informant.

Another student received partial credit in French, English, and Biology courses for his work in planning the purchase and habitation of his own island. An extensive geographical search for available islands resulted in the choice of a French territory in the West Indies, followed by letter writing (in French), interviews with ship owners who had traveled to that area and adventurers who ran wilderness survival schools, collection of information from the city natural science centers and UC Agricultural Extension concerning possible food sources. The student arranged with each teacher separately the work to be done and how it related to regular course assignments and requirements. Although the student couldn't actually buy an island, independent study gave him an opportunity to express his energy, enthusiasm and intelligence. Dreams explored are much more satisfying than "dreams deferred."

Other projects might be based on extra-curricular activities. Students have often run money-making projects to finance yearbooks or other school activities. Advertising campaigns for local businesses, student cafeterias or food services, and lunch-time film programs are examples of such enterprises. Such activities can be related to courses so that credit can be given—in English, mathematics, consumer economics, home economics, psychology, government or art courses.

Other projects may take students into community activities. One student who was interested in tape recording helped produce tapes at the language lab of a local junior college and wrote a report for his general science class. Another student worked on the advertising campaign of a local charitable organization. He kept a journal and collected samples of letters, interviews and advertisements, for which he received partial credit in English.

Such activities give students a chance to apply their "book learning" and can generate interest in subject matter that might otherwise seem boring or pointless.

Independent study could also be related to career exploration. Some schools offer career courses or programs, but similar experience can be provided in conjunction with regular courses. A student might interview workers in his/her field of interest, or be helped to develop a project of observing and reporting to a class on actual experience of summer jobs or part-time work during the school year.

Imaginative use of local facilities can help students learn about careers that might at first glance seem inaccessible to them. For example, a student who lived in a city and was interested in forestry received science and English credit for bird banding at a local science center, patrolling on foot and by helicopter with city park rangers, and working with school district gardeners on landscape design and maintenance. Another student gained "aviation experience" and credit in science and English by observing at the local airport control tower, interviewing pilots, keeping a journal, and reading related books such as St. Exupery's *Wind, Sand, Stars.*

Other projects might involve an entire class. For instance, an English class could plan and conduct a career day, surveying students' career interests, inviting speakers, arranging meetings, and writing thank-you letters.

INDEPENDENT STUDY FOR "TURNED OFF" STUDENTS

Any of the projects mentioned in the previous section may be useful for students who are "turned off" because they cannot see that schooling is relevant to their lives and the jobs they will eventually take.

For some students, school attendance and ordinary classroom activities may be irksome. For example, a girl who was an accomplished athlete became disenchanted with the regular P.E. course. In cooperation with her English and P.E. teachers she set up a program of yoga, jogging and skiing, and wrote narrative and descriptive reports about her experiences. A boy who was expected to work 40 hours a week in his family's small business was helped to relate his on-the-job activities to his English and mathematics courses. Another boy, fascinated by films, reported on movies for English and history credit.

"Turned off" students can be poor risks, particularly in activities requiring individual responsibility and initiative. However, for reaching those whose interests school does not serve through regular classes, the potential seems great.

INDEPENDENT STUDY AND PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

Secondary students will soon be facing the problems of "independence." They will be working, marrying, buying major appliances and paying bills. Incorporating such experiences into the curriculum in simulated or "real" form provides students with an example of the practical relevance of the curriculum, and with the benefits of support and assistance from their teachers and peers. An extended example follows, illustrating how the practical task of purchasing an automobile can be incorporated in English, social science and consumer economics classes.

Extended Example

TOPIC: Simulating the purchase of an automobile and automobile insurance. Relating such a practical topic to English, social studies or consumer economics requires students to ask questions which relate the activity to broader issues or topics under study in the regular curriculum.

A. **Possible Questions to Ask:**

1. *For English:* What sorts of characters seem most often to choose to be sales persons? Do the real life people fit the stereotype of a salesman that often appears in literature? What sorts of emotional appeals are made in the language of advertising? What propaganda techniques are utilized? How do (specific) cars function as symbols? In what different ways or for what psychological purposes do people use them?

2. *For Social Studies:* In what ways are neighborhoods affected by different types of cars (noise, space needed, utility, psychological effects, status, etc.) What laws affect buying/selling of cars and insurance? What recourses do consumers have if they feel they have been treated unfairly or illegally? What differences are there in marketing policies among various car dealers/manufacturers? (for example, ease and speed of distribution, display models for inspection, etc.) Who *pays* for such extra service? What training is required for auto or insurance sales? What benefits and drawbacks do such jobs have?

3. *For Consumer Economics:* What car is most appropriate for you according to the manufacturer? What cars are supposedly suited for the teen market? What car is most suitable for you personally, after you consider benefits and costs (initial costs, financing, maintenance, insurance, etc.) What are the different methods of financing auto purchases, and what are the comparative advantages of each? What variations exist in auto insurance policies and costs? Are teens treated fairly by insurance company pricing policies?

B. **Possible Follow-up Activities:**

1. *For English:* Write a character description of the most interesting sales person you encountered, or a character composite of the typical sales person,

or a scenario for a TV show focusing on the adventures of a sales person. Or...imagine the world from a "Martian perspective," thinking how an extraterrestrial visitor might view the U.S.'s automania. Describe it from that viewpoint, showing a land run by, for and in the smoke of automobiles.

2. *For Social Studies:* Write a critique of laws regarding automobile and car insurance sales, making recommendations for changes. (This project might also include interviews with lawyers, law enforcement officers, etc.) Write directions to be followed by someone who has been "ripped off": what should be done to secure justice. (A student might then follow an actual case through the courts.)

3. *For Consumer Economics:* After making a careful cost analysis of several cars, write a defense of what car might be best for you to buy and why. Collect all necessary forms for completion of purchase, plus notes on how to complete them. Rewrite them into "plain English."

The questions and follow-up activities given above suggest the diverse treatment that a practical task or assignment can be given when considered in an academic classroom. Such experiences seem particularly desirable because they encourage students to apply course content to experiences that they *will* encounter later in life, and thus students learn that even the most "academic, college-bound" subjects can have practical value. Also, these applied experiences encourage students to begin asking questions from the perspective of what is being learned in class. The development of question-asking skills and the application of knowledge gained through thoughtfully asked questions forms the essential basis for life-long, *self*-education. Teaching these skills should be the goal not only of independent study activities, but of all educational enterprises. (See Postman and Weingarten, *Teaching As a Subversive Activity* for an extended discussion of the significance of asking questions, and a variety of activities to develop a "question-based" curriculum.)

III.

Independent Study in the Elementary School

Independent study has rarely been used in the elementary school curriculum. Usually thought of as a form of learning requiring a high level of intellectual development and self-discipline, it has been reserved for high school seniors and college students. Its use in elementary schools has been limited to providing a means for advanced students or those with special interests to do research on their own special topics and report back to the teacher and class. With recent changes in state law, it is now possible to use independent study in a more dynamic and flexible way to meet the needs of students of all ages who have special interests as well as to provide alternatives for students having difficulty adapting to a regular classroom.

What follows does not provide an exhaustive list of the ways independent study can be used. It does consider several examples in detail, providing model learning contracts, and then listing other possibilities that might be developed. The first examples involve students who, because of extended absence, truancy or expulsion, are not receiving credit for school. The second set of examples will show how independent study can be used for students who want to learn about special topics in new ways.

NON-ATTENDING STUDENTS

Example 1: A student in any grade, K-8, is leaving the country for 2 months. Normally the student will receive no credit for this time away. Yet, because the the student knows in advance of the trip and because there is a parent willing to help in a minimal way, an independent study can be established. The necessary ingredients are 1) a child willing to take on the responsibility of working on his/her own; 2) a parent willing to supervise and vouch for the work; and 3) a teacher willing to prepare the contract and hear about the child's experiences at the end of the trip.

The simplest form of independent study in this case is one based on the traditional classroom curriculum. Thus, depending on the age and skills of the child, the teacher can assign certain reading and reading workbook assignments, math and language lessons, and a scrapbook or diary project to encompass writing and art skills. Programmed learning texts can be easily used in this circumstance. These materials can be purchased out of the ADA funds normally lost for this student. In the sample contract that follows, the teacher makes use of a semi-monthly letter from the student (signed also by the parent) which serves both to evaluate progress and to utilize writing skills.

For non-writers, this technique can be modified, allowing a parent to record the child's letter for him or her.

SAMPLE CONTRACT: Extended Vacation. Focus: Basic skill work.
I. Purpose: Maintain level of learning in basic subject areas so student does not fall behind.
II. Subject Areas: Language Arts, Math, Art.
III. Activities: a) Sullivan Programmed Learning, all of "Division."
b) Workbook assignment (reading) plus reading all of 4 books chosen in advance by teacher and student.
c) finish one project on each book. (For example, design a book jacket including front and back picture, spine, and a brief summary on the back enticing someone to read the book.)
d) make a scrapbook/diary of trip. Scrapbook should be 8½" by 11" with cover designed by you. Include in it photos, drawings or pictures cut from magazines showing where you have been, what you have done, what it is like. Label and explain each picture. At least once a week write about an interesting person you met.
IV. Evaluation: a) every two weeks, write a letter to your teacher telling what you have accomplished, describing the projects you have finished, and recounting two interesting things that have happened to you. (Have parent sign this letter as well.)
b) oral and written testing of student's skills on return.

This contract is simple but makes little use of the child's unique situation. Other activities can be designated that involve learning based on the student's travel environment. This is especially good for science, art, and social studies. These activities can easily be modified to suit the grade level of the child. For example, a first grader might have as a substitute for the scrapbook/diary, an assignment to draw and label pictures of the house he/she is living in, or make lists of the things people do during the day or differences between the child's old and new neighborhoods. A fifth grader might be given assignments like drawing a map showing how he/she got to the new place, a map of the town, a list of interesting places to visit with descriptions, interviews with people doing different kinds of work; etc. All of these activities could be combined into the production of a guidebook to the city or town visited.

Here are other possibilities for such travel-related activities:

- History of the city—By visiting museums, libraries, talking to people, write and illustrate a history of the place where you are staying. How did it begin, who settled there, major events, etc.
- Family history—You may be meeting/staying with relatives. Make a family tree, writing one paragraph on each family member's life. Interview your relatives about their lives.
- Design and send postcards—Using heavier paper, cut postcard size rectangles. One one side, draw a scene from your new life. Write a message on the back and send to a friend.
- Chart differences—List the differences between your regular school's city and the place where you are staying. Possible categories: how people live and work, climate, clothing, food, problems, etc.

• Visit museums—Write and illustrate a description of your visit.

• Oral history—Interview relatives, neighbors, especially older people. Ask them about their lives, where they have lived and worked, what changes they have seen.

• Collections of plants and insects—Choose a category like leaves, plants, moths, bugs. Devise a way to mount and label them. Find out their names by talking to local people.

• Weather charting—Make a climate chart. Include temperature, precipitation, wind, clouds, etc. Measure every day and record.

• Learning songs—Learn one that you have never heard before.

• Work—List all the different kinds you see. Interview people to find out what they like and don't like about their work, what they would like to change, etc.

• Opinion surveys—Write a survey with several questions. Ask about problems, likes, dislikes, what changes people want.

Example 2: A student, 6th grade, is often absent without excuse. The reasons given are many: the key seems to be a dislike for the "boredom" of school. The student learns quickly, yet has not mastered many skills because of absences. An independent study is set up that utilizes three positive things in the child's life: friendship with some high school students, knowledge of the city the child lives in (based on the amount of time spent wandering the streets when not in school), and a desire to be recognized in a positive way by his/her peers.

SAMPLE CONTRACT: Truant. Focus: writing skills, math.

I. Purpose: Bring basic skills to grade level.

II. Subject Areas: Language Arts, Math, Reading.

III. Activities: a) write a bi-weekly newspaper (to be shared in class by teacher or student) called "News from the Streets." Included in every issue will be:

- an article on a particularly interesting way to spend a few hours in the city.
- an article reviewing the week's best in sports, music, movies, or TV.
- a map of part of the city, giving helpful hints to other kids, e.g. bus routes, short cuts, best stores to buy candy in, etc.
- a review of one book (chosen from public library)
- at least one picture.
- one other article, game or activity, such as an interview or survey.
- all to be done neatly in newspaper format.

b) work in math textbook on pre-assigned basis.

c) meet three times per week with high school tutor. These sessions will involve going over math, and proofreading and preparing newspaper. (High school student is also receiving independent study credit for tutoring elementary students.)

IV. Evaluation: a) Student meets with teacher each Friday to turn in math and newspaper. Receives next week's math assignments.

b) Weekly phone calls from tutor to teacher.

c) Monthly parent/teacher conference with student attending.

Example 3: A 5th grade student with learning difficulties, severe distraction problem in regular classroom, has an individual teacher for one hour per day in the individualized instruction (DIS) program, is extremely good with carpentry and has an interest in outdoors and animals.

This contract makes use of the state funded help the student is receiving, yet allows him to use independent study to alleviate the pressures of being in the classroom 5 hours each day.

It was discovered the student wanted to build a pigeon coop and collect pigeons. His schedule was arranged so he would meet first thing each morning with his individual teacher. They would go over the previous day's work, the day's schedule, and work on particular skills. On Monday and Friday the student would remain in school to take part in the writing assignment given on Mon. (and shared on Fri.), the Friday art activity, and P.E. But on Tuesday through Thursday he would return home in the morning. After 1-2 hours work in math or reading with parent supervision, he would have all afternoon for his special project. This involved research on pigeon care and building the coop, purchase of pigeons, etc. Much writing was included. The student wrote a rudimentary handbook on pigeon-raising, including his design of the coop. Evaluation was continuous through the daily meetings with the individual teacher, the written work, a visit to the student's home by the teacher to see the written work, and parent conferences.

REGULAR ATTENDANCE STUDENTS

Students attending class on a regular basis can also benefit from independent study. For those students interested in special areas and for those identified as needing teaching which the classroom cannot provide, independent study offers cross-age tutoring, small group field study, apprenticeships and field work in community organizations. In each case, the student must be responsible for maintaining the learning contract. The teacher must be willing to release the students from class, help set up the contract, and allot time for evaluation and in-class follow-up. As with any curriculum innovation, there is a great deal of potential for students, but it does mean additional preparation for teachers. A paid or volunteer independent study coordinator is essential to set up those programs that involve schools, tutors and adults in the community.

Example 1: Cross-age tutoring: a student, grade 3-8, acts as a tutor for a younger student in his or her own school or in another school. Cross-age tutoring is an extremely effective, simple process which allows one student to help another with basic skills or in content [illegible] not offered in the regular curriculum. Both tutor and younger student le[illegible]d receive credit. A tutor on a regular basis may offer help in math, language arts, social relations, motor skills and movement. Based on the younger student's interest, a tutor could develop science projects, math materials, assist with library work, read and select books with the student, record and proofread stories, design and make art projects.

SAMPLE CONTRACT: Cross-age tutoring (for 2nd grader with 6th grade tutor) Focus: language arts.

I. Purpose: Supplement classwork in reading and writing.
Reinforce older student's language skills and self-concept.

II. Subject Areas: Language Arts.

III. Activities: a) tutor talks with student about his/her interests, exciting event in life, etc.

b) Student records thoughts in journal kept for these meetings, goes over it with tutor. Every other week, student develops story from these journal entries.

c) Tutor takes student to library. Tutor reads books with child, discusses plot sequence, etc. Student records main ideas, interesting words.

d) Student writes story and presents it to teacher.

This contract places the responsibility for planning and evaluating on the two students involved. Both participants use writing in many different forms, which is the primary purpose of this independent study.

Example 2: Small group field study: a small group of K-8 students working with a high school student or other adult on a regular basis. This type of independent study is also possible when a co-ordinator puts teachers and students in touch with interested adults. These adults might have particular expertise or project in mind. For example, a senior citizen interested in gardening would be willing to plant a garden with four students two afternoons per week at the school; an architecture student at a local college is designing playground equipment and wants four second and third graders to help two days a week; two science students from the high school each need three interested fifth or sixth graders to help design and build circuit boards. These are just a few of the possible ways high school students and adults can aid elementary students.

Rather than beginning with interested adults, a teacher can also begin by identifying students who have needs that could best be met outside the classroom. These students might need additional directed physical activity, time to design and build projects, or challenging science activities the classroom cannot provide. The teacher contacts the independent study coordinator who looks for the community people who can meet these students' needs.

SAMPLE CONTRACT: Small group field work. Focus: weather.

These 6th graders are interested in science and are capable of working outside of class. They have expressed interest in setting up their own projects. A college student agrees to come to their school to develop a weather station.

I. Purpose: increase knowledge of meteorology and develop ability to take on responsibilities.

II. Subject Areas: science, math, writing.

III. Activities: a) Design and construct a weather station with college student.

b) Observe and record weather.

c) Report back to class about building station and observing weather.

d) Write a manual for other students on how to build a weather station.

e) Make charts for school display recording daily weather.

f) Write articles for school and local papers about station and observations.

IV. Evaluation: a) Teacher, tutor and student establish criteria and rate the weather station, the records and charts, the reports to class, the manual.
b) College student reports once a week to teacher on progress of project.

Example 3: The following contract is based on teacher-diagnosed needs of four students who need more directed physical activity than the school curriculum permits. These fourth graders become restless in class and distract other students. While capable, they are falling behind in basic skills because they have short attention spans. A high school student with a life-saving certificate will help.

SAMPLE CONTRACT: Teacher-diagnosed need. Focus: Physical Education and First Aid.

I. Purpose: a) Students to have supplementary directed physical exercise.
b) improve basic writing skills.

II. Subject Areas: science, first aid, writing, physical education.

III. Activities: a) Meet twice per week with high school student. Physical activities include football, basketball, swimming, bicycling, running.
b) First aid training: Make visits to Fire Rescue Department. Learn about basic bicycle safety, safety on streets. Study Red Cross self-instruction course on basic injuries and care.
d) Design posters for school on safety and first aid.
e) Write manuals for other students on safety and first aid.
f) Explain and demonstrate safety and first aid techniques in classroom.

IV. Evaluation: a) Students earn certificates from Red Cross.
b) Teachers, tutor and students rate posters and manual and class demonstration.
c) High school student reports to teacher.

Example 4: Individual or small groups of students exploring the community. Any community, rural, suburban or urban, offers a variety of independent study possibilities through its people, community organizations, small businesses and visitor attractions. Elementary participation depends on a supervising adult, but experience has shown that there are people in almost any community who will willingly work with students. The following three contracts provide samples of the variety of projects that are possible, through apprenticeships, mini-field trips and work in community organizations.

SAMPLE CONTRACT: Apprenticeship. Focus: woodworking skills.

I. Purpose: Provide student with opportunity to learn in depth about woodworking; to accept responsibility for own learning.

II. Subject Areas: Woodworking, math, language arts.

III. Activities: a) Student works with adult who has a shop or garage set up as a woodshop. Student works with adult on a regular basis as an apprentice-helper. Tasks, purposes and hours clearly established by adult and student. (NOTE: This project's aim is to teach the student woodworking, NOT for the school to provide free labor to small business. This must be an explicit presumption of all apprenticeships.)
b) Student, on completing a project, writes a "how-to" manual and shares with class.

IV. Evaluation: a) Every two weeks student reports to teacher in writing: student keeps notebook/journal on work. Detail depends on age of student.
b) Teacher/student conferences.
c) Finished work.
d) Once a month, adult meets with teacher and student.

This contract is adaptable for students who work in small businesses such as print shops, hardware stores, bakeries, or who work with a craftperson in a studio or shop such as pottery, weaving, jewelry, photography. It is best suited for fourth through eighth graders.

Example 5: Mini-Field trips. Under independent study, a teacher need no longer accompany a whole class on a field trip. With an appropriate contract, a parent can take a small number of children out while the teacher remains with the rest of the class. Parent volunteers are often available for this kind of help.

SAMPLE CONTRACT: Mini-Field Trip. Focus: community differences
I. Purpose: a) Observation of differences within a city.
b) Understand reasons for such differences.
II. Subject Areas: social studies, language arts.
III. Activities: a) Four students will go on two trips to culturally different parts of the city.
b) Students will complete chart of observations (kinds of work, shops, people, etc.)
c) After second trip, students will list similarities and differences.
d) After discussion, students will develop a theory that explains such differences.
e) For younger children: students list words and phrases that describe what they see in each area.
f) Categorize words and discuss word lists.
g) Follow-up activity: read books, research about particular kinds of comminities and about other parts of city.
h) Interview people along the way, or do attitude survey about problems in that part of the city. Compare results. Write a news article about it.
IV. Evaluation: a) Teacher evaluates written work (charts, stories, etc.)
b) Phone conversation with adult who led trip.

Example 6: Field work in community organizations. The simplest form of this activity for elementary students is to work in a day-care center.

SAMPLE CONTRACT: Tutor in day-care center (grades 4-8).
I. Purpose: allow two students to work with younger children in a structured environment.
II. Subject Areas: child-care, language arts, art.
III. Activities: a) Students prepare lesson plan in advance and consult with regular teacher and day-care teacher.
b) Meet two mornings a week in day-care center.
c) Read own stories to small group in center.
d) Read books aloud with children.
e) Record stories told by children.
f) Assist with art projects.

IV. Evaluation: a) lesson plans.
b) Student confe with day-care teacher.
c) Conversation ween regular teacher and day-care teacher.
d) Student keeps own written record of lessons and how they went.
e) Students uses his experience as the basis for a newspaper article, or a presentation to the class.
f) Follow-up: interview day care workers about their jobs and the students about the activities of the center.

Student participation in health clinics, recreation centers, senior citizen centers, programs for the handicapped, libraries and museums provides students with an opportunity to pursue an interest in an involving, responsible way. These possibilities offer an in-depth learning experience, rather than being simply a work experience that removes a child from school.

IV.

Writing and Independent Study

Independent study provides many opportunities for students to write with a purpose that is clear and important to them. Providing a purpose for writing and regarding that writing as important are key motivating factors in improving a student's writing. If a student knows that his/her writing will sit on a teacher's desk for a week, be graded and then thrown away, the student will eventually conclude that writing is just another bothersome teacher demand, unrelated to the process of learning.

Writing is a learning tool: it is a means whereby students can articulate who they are and what they think. It is a means of communicating ideas. There will be times when a short note to a partner explaining an observation or a note to oneself as a reminder will be more useful and appropriate than a 100-word essay. Opportunities should be provided for writing to different audiences.*

Six possible audiences are:

1. child to self
2. child to peers (as expert, co-worker, friend)
3. child to teacher as trusted adult
4. child to teacher as partner in dialogue
5. child to teacher as examiner
6. child to unknown audience

As a student progresses in these forms, the writing becomes more formal, "child to self" being the most personal form and "child to unknown audience" being the expository statement. While all six audiences are critical in developing writing ability, the progression need not be linear. Moving back and forth depending on curriculum and purpose is more useful. The learning contracts in this pamphlet provide many examples of kinds of writing done with varying purposes and audiences, but most of them are student-initiated, and that is the key motivating factor. In every case the child's willingness to take on a learning contract and have an independent study includes an acceptance of writing as an activity and evaluation technique.

Examples:

1. Child to self: writer uses "I." a) notes as reminders b) lesson plans c) journal of daily events as a means of self-evaluation.

2. Child to peers: The student writes in a casual way similar to conversation.

*For elaboration of this concept of audience, see *Writing and Learning Across the Curriculum*, Martin, D'Arcy, Newton, Parker, Schools Council Project.

a) child to co-worker on project, students working in day care center need to share plans, results b) student writes directions to place for others to visit on field trip c) handbooks and manuals written for other students.

3. Child to teacher as trusted adult: Student using "I" and feeling safe enough to express personal feelings and ideas. Student assumes teacher is sympathetic and supportive. a) letter to teacher from student on extended vacation b) student writing to describe reactions to independent study, what it is like to be away from school, what student thinks of supervising adult, etc.

4. Child to teacher as partner in dialogue: Writing here deals more with ideas. Child trusts reader and is willing to try out ideas and get a response. Writer uses "we," "one," and "I." a) student evaluation of project done in independent study b) evaluation of independent study, including description of projects, problems, etc. These thoughtful comments deserve an equally thoughtful response from teacher or adult. c) similar dialogue between student and tutor.

5. Child to teacher as examiner: Student writing in test form and writing to satisfy demands of teacher or tutor. Student knows he/she will be judged. a) formal test at the end of independent study project. Used as formal evaluation for school or district, if necessary.

6. Child to unknown audience: When a child feels confident enough of thoughts and ideas to present them to the "world," the writing is more anonymous and formal. Student thinks what he/she has to say should be read for its own merit as an objective report on a project or in subject areas (for example, observations and theorizing on differences between parts of a city). This kind of report may be given as a talk to other classes. a) pamphlets or booklets written for other students b) newspaper articles c) material for debate or panel discussion.

Independent study offers unlimited writing opportunities for students and therefore encourages essential learning skills. If students are allowed and encouraged to write for different readers, their versatility and skill with written language will improve.

V.

Independent Study and Basic Competency

California law requires school districts to establish competency standards which students must meet in order to graduate and at various stages prior to graduation. Establishment of this requirement has been considered the legislature's response to a public demand for "back to basics." And "back to basics" has often been considered as an expression of opposition to educational flexibility and innovation. Yet just the opposite is the case as was pointed out by Assemblyman Gary Hart, author of the minimum competency standards legislation:

> We have warned educators against a "back-to-basics" mentality. Instruction in the basic skills need not be implemented at the expense of flexibility, of creativity or of innovation. Basic skills instruction is, of course, only one part of schooling. California schools should continue to offer broad experience in the fine arts, humanities and sciences.
> In fact, basic skills are most effectively taught when integrated throughout the curriculum. Community based study that includes work in reading, writing or mathematics can motivate many students to excel in the basics. Proficiency legislation should not cause our school districts to collapse the curriculum or abandon creative approaches to learning.

A school district can use an independent study program to assist students in achieving basic skills competency. Students can work in small groups or individually with volunteer tutors or para-professionals on or off campus. A certificated employee would provide the immediate instructional support. Creative use of volunteers and teacher aides is an important element of a program to help students meet district levels of minimum competency because state competency legislation does not provide for any funding for meeting the new minimum competency requirements. In addition, as Assemblyman Hart points out, giving students learning choices and offering a variety of educational settings will motivate some students who do not respond favorably to a regular classroom instructional program. Educational alternatives can bring success where remedial education has failed because it is simply not enough for some students to give them more of the same in terms of style and content of learning.

VI.
Appendix

Following are examples of district program guidelines for independent study and examples of individual student contracts. Because there is considerable flexibility in the law and because each district has different needs, your guidelines and student contracts will be different from any one of the following examples. Particular attention should be paid to the Title 5 regulations which specify what is required for your district to operate a contract independent study program within the framework of SB 1501.

The California Consortium for Independent Study has been formed to exchange information about independent study programs, to sponsor conferences and workshops and to aid in program development and evaluation. For those interested, a membership application has been included.

CHAPTER 15. INDEPENDENT STUDY PROGRAMS

Detailed Analysis

Article 1. General Provisions

Section
11700. Definitions
11701. District Responsibilities

Article 2. Standards for Independent Study

Section
11702. Agreements
11703. Records

Article 1. General Provisions

11700. Definitions. For the purposes of this chapter the following terms mean:

(a) Independent Study: An alternative to a regular classroom program of instruction.

(b) Supervisor: Any credentialed staff member assigned to supervise or oversee a student engaged in independent study.

(c) Student: A student enrolled in grades 7–12 in a school for which Education Code Section 11006 or 11052 provides for the minimum school day.

NOTE: Authority cited: Sections 152 and 11251 (a), Education Code. Reference: Section 11251 (a), Education Code.

History: 1. New Chapter 15 (Sections 11700–11703) filed 10-22-76, effective thirtieth day thereafter (Register 76, No. 43).

11701. District Responsibilities. Each school district governing board conducting independent study shall adopt written policies and procedures governing such study, including the nature and scope of independent study. All courses of independent study shall be designed to fit the educational needs of the participating pupils.

Article 2. Standards for Independent Study

11702. Agreements. (a) Independent study shall be based on a written agreement signed by the student, the student's parents, or legal guardian for minor students, and the supervisor.

(b) This agreement shall include but not be limited to:

(1) A statement of objectives.
(2) The manner in which objectives will be evaluated.
(3) The duration of the independent study contract.
(4) The manner, time, and place of reporting progress.
(5) The signature of any person other than school staff who will be assisting students.

11703. Records. (a) Record keeping shall be the responsibility of the local district and shall include but not be limited to:

(1) A file of agreements.
(2) A list of students participating in independent study.
(3) The number of credits/units attempted.
(4) The number of students successfully completing a contract or agreement.
(5) The number of credits/units awarded.

(b) All reporting to the state agency will be included in the October Report.

SAN MATEO UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTING INDEPENDENT STUDY (Revised)

as provided for in Chapter 210, Statutes of 1976

These guidelines are in accordance with California Administrative Code, Title 5, Part I Division II, Chapter 15, Sections 11700-11703.

I. Definition, Rationale, and Scope

A. Definition: Independent study is an alternative to a regular classroom program of instruction.

B. Rationale: There are times when it is in a student's best interest to include in his or her program, independent study in addition to, or instead of, regular course assignments. The Board has recognized the need to provide opportunities for independent study as part of the district's instructional program in their policy statement of 1972.

C. Scope: An individual student or group of students may engage in independent study, on or off campus. An independent study may range from an activity as part of the regular class to an activity completely separate from the regular program.

D. An independent study program or project need not be limited in time or geographical distance from school site.

II. Procedures for Implementation of Independent Study

A. Supervision: (1) Each school shall designate a coordinator of independent study. The coordinator shall be responsible for the administration and supervision of the independent study program. (2) Independent study programs must be under the primary supervision of a school certificated staff member; however, immediate supervision of an activity can be undertaken by other individuals who have volunteered, but are not directly affiliated with the school district, such as parents, students, or other community members.

B. Coordination: Each school shall develop guidelines including, but not limited to, procedures for:

a. identifying students appropriate for the program
b. enrolling students in the program
c. monitoring student progress
d. evaluating student learning

C. Written Agreements: (1) Independent study shall be based on a written agreement signed by the student, the student's parents, or legal guardian for minor students, and the certificated supervisor. (2) This agreement shall include, but not be limited to:

a. a statement of objectives
b. the kinds of activities
c. the manner in which the objectives will be evaluated
d. the duration of the independent study contract
e. the manner, time, and place of reporting progress
f. the signature of any person other than school staff who will be assisting students.

D. Records: (1) Records shall be maintained at each school site and shall include but not be limited to:

a. a file of agreements
b. a list of students participating in independent study
c. the number of credits/units attempted and completed
d. the number of students successfully completing a contract or agreement
e. grade and/or evaluation

INDEPENDENT STUDY

When it appears to be in their best interests, a student may be assigned to a program of Independent Study. Such an assignment requires the signed mutual consent and agreement of the school, the parents, or responsible adults, and the pupil. An Independent Study assignment may or may not include some classes in the regular school program. A program of Independent Study must conform to the following:

1. Each school principal shall act as or appoint a credentialed staff member to act as supervisor of the Independent Study program. The responsibility of the supervisor will be to monitor the program and maintain communication with the instructor(s) who are in regular student contact. The instructor(s) may or may not be credentialed.

2. For any high school student, the supervisor will make a recommendation and secure the approval of the Director of Secondary Education prior to placement on an Independent Study program. An elementary student must have the recommendation of the school supervisor and the approval of the Director of Elementary Education before being placed on an Independent Study program.

3. An educational plan for the student must be agreed upon and signed by the student, school supervisor, the parents or responsible adult, and any person not a member of the school staff that will be working with the student. This plan is to be kept on file at the school of enrollment.

4. The educational plan must represent the equivalent of a minimum school day for a given grade level. It is not necessary to schedule the student to have teacher contact for this time, but the expected objectives should reflect this in credits earned, time allotted, prerequisites accepted, etc. The plan shall include the following items:

   a. A statement of pupil objectives
   b. A statement as to how the objectives will be evaluated
   c. The length of time the plan agreement will be in effect. (There is no legal maximum or minimum length.)
   d. The manner, time, and place of instructor-student meetings
   e. The method and frequency of reporting progress to the supervisor

INDEPENDENT STUDY

5. Each school shall maintain an Independent Study records file that shall include a copy of each educational plan for the students of that school.

   The file should be organized in such a manner that the names of students, credits attempted, credits granted, and the number of students passing or failing are easily obtainable.

6. A program of Independent Study is based upon the genuine needs of a given student. As an example, such a program might be allowed as an alternative to expulsion, as a protective measure, a tool to work with a school phobic, an alternative to home teaching, for a student genuinely needed at home, an extended family vacation, etc.

7. In cases of disputed credit, the student or the family may make an appeal to the Associate Superintendent.

Board Action: 2/1/77

WORKING FORM FOR INDEPENDENT STUDY

This form is to help you plan for independent study. Take your time and think about each question. Be specific in your answers.

1. Suppose you had an opportunity to leave school right now and get credit for the time spent doing whatever you're doing? List three things you could do that would be a profitable educational experience. (Use the reverse side of the paper.)

   a. _____

   b. _____

   c. _____

2. How satisfying would these thing be to you right now?

   _____

   _____

   _____

3. List your educational objectives.

   a. _____

   b. _____

   c. _____

4. What are your educational needs?

   a. _____

   b. _____

   c. _____

5. What kinds of things would you need to achieve your objective?

   a. _____

   b. _____

   c. _____

6. How would you evaluate your work or end products (term paper, tests, observation by instructor, etc.)?

   _____

   _____

WORKING FORM CONT'

7. How and when would you report your progress(daily, weekly, monthly, by phone or letter, etc.)?

_____

_____

8. How long would you be doing this work or project? Indicate by writing the number of days or weeks_____

9. How many units would you be attempting?_____

10. In what areas would you like the units?

a._____ Other_____

b._____

c._____

11. How would you be graded?

a. Letter grades A B C D F

b. Pass/Fail

c. Descriptive statement

_____
Students Signature Grade

_____
Date

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SAN LEANDRO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

INDEPENDENT STUDY PROGRAM AGREEMENT

Student Name _____ D.O.B. _____

School _____ Grade _____

Home Address _____ Phone _____

Parents Name _____

Term of Contract _____ to _____ _____

Dates for student contacts

Educational Needs of the student:

Educational Objectives: To represent a minimum school day.

Materials and Activities for Achieving Objectives:

_____
Student Signature

_____
Parent Signature

_____
Supervising Teacher Signature

Other Assisting Person

_____
Supervisor Attendance & Support Services

_____
Date

Evaluation of Educational Objectives:

Total Credits Attempted_____

Total Credits Granted _____

Supervisor Attendance & Support Service Approval:

_____

_____
Supervising Teacher Signature

_____
Date

rcs
3/77

Proposed

MT. DIABLO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
OUTREACH
CONTRACT INDEPENDENT STUDY

Name: _____ D.O.B.: _____

Student Number: _____ OUTREACH Case Number: _____

Independent Study Contract

This contract is designed for students who want to undertake a long-term independent study in a specific area of interest.

I. Student Learning Goals:
The student will describe what he/she wants to learn and why.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

II. Credit:
The student will receive one unit of high school credit for every 20 hours of supervised independent study. OUTREACH can only record credit on official records in completed one-unit blocks.

III. Schedule:
The student and teacher agree to meet according to the following schedule in order to review progress towards contract goals.

_____ Time _____ Days

IV. Learning Activities:
A. The student will use the following learning activities (as checked) to accomplish the goals described in Section I.

___Library research
___Interviews with knowledgeable persons
___Self-directed field trip to important places/events
___Discussion
___Formal instruction
___Group activities
___Reading (See attached list.)
___Practice exercises

B. Course Outline.
The student will attach a brief outline of the proposed independent study course.

C. Supervision.
In addition to regular supervision by the OUTREACH teacher, the student and teacher may designate additional persons to assist the student during the independent study contract period.

Additional Supervisor	Position/Title
_____	_____
_____	_____

V. Evaluation Activities:
The student will demonstrate what he has learned by the following means (as checked).

___Log book or diary
___written report
___annotated bibliography
___scrap book
___tape recordings
___photographs
___oral report
___diagrams, charts or maps
___models or prototype
___collection of materials or samples
___Demonstration
___Other: _____

Upon completing the learning and evaluation activities as described above, the student will receive _____units of earned high school credit in _____.
Course

VI. Agreement:
We have read the above contract and agree to the terms described herein.

_____
Date

_____
Student Signature

_____
Teacher Signature

VII. Certification:
The OUTREACH faculty certifies that by completing this contract, the above-named student has earned high school credit in the following areas.

Course Area	Units of Credit Earned	Teacher's Initials
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

_____
Date

_____
Signature (OUTREACH Faculty Representative)

Credit Recorded: _____

_____
Registrar's Initials

MBW/BA:b

CODE I___ S___
O___ W___
B___ Y___

LONG BEACH UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

INDEPENDENT STUDY CONTRACT

Name _____ Birthdate _____ Sex ____ Grade ____

School of Enrollment _____ Date of Placement _____

Individual Education Plan

I. A. I agree to perform the following task _____

B. I will complete the task on or before (write in date) _____

C. I will be evaluated for this task by presenting the following to my advisor

1. Oral Report(s)_____ 3. Drawing(s)_____ 5. Diagram(s)___ 7. Model(s)____
2. Written Report(s)___ 4. Photograph(s)___ 6. Map(s)_____ 8. Other_____

Explain _____

D. I will receive _____ credits if I complete this task.

E. I understand that my grade will be awarded by the quality of work performed.

F. I will report or make progress checks with the Learning Center Staff (write down specific time, place, and duration) _____

II. A. I agree to perform the following task _____

B. I will complete the task on or before (write in date) _____

C. I will be evaluated for this task by presenting the following to my advisor

1. Oral Report(s)_____ 3. Drawing(s)_____ 5. Diagram(s)___ 7. Model(s)____
2. Written Report(s)___ 4. Photograph(s)___ 6. Map(s)_____ 8. Other_____

Explain _____

D. I will receive _____ credits if I complete this task.

E. I understand that my grade will be awarded by the quality of work performed.

F. I will report or make progress checks with the Learning Center Staff (write down specific time, place, and duration) _____

I understand, agree and will fulfill the contents of this contract _____
Pupil's Signature

Witnesses: _____ _____ _____
Parent/Guardian Advisor/Instructor Community Volunteer Instructor

SAN MATEO UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

INDEPENDENT STUDY CONTRACT

Name _____ Sex M ___ F ___ Grade _____ Age ____ School _____ Date _____

Independent Study Category

- ☐ Regular Class Connected
- ☐ Separate from Regular Program
- ☐ On Campus Study
- ☐ Off Campus Study
- ☐ Private Instruction
- ☐ Educational Travel
- ☐ Other

Duration of Time _____ Requested Units of Credit _____

Hours of Activity _____ Grading _____ (A-F, Pass/Fail, N.M.)

Subject Area or Educational Activity _____

Location of Activity _____

Immediate Supervisor _____ Address of Supervisor _____

_____

Primary Certificated Supervisor _____ Department _____

Statement of Objectives: (Attach additional description if needed.)

1.
2.
3.
4.

Description of Educational Activities and Completion Dates:

1. Completion Date _____
2. Completion Date _____
3. Completion Date _____
4. Completion Date _____

Description of Final Independent Study Report:

Demonstration
Presentation
Other (please specify) _____

_____

Evaluation:

- ☐ Onsite Demonstration
- ☐ Presentation
- ☐ Formalized Project
- ☐ Description _____

_____

Interim Evaluation:

Date Due _____ To Whom Submitted _____

Final Evaluation:

Date Due _____ To Whom Submitted _____

Final Completion Date: _____

Signatures: Student _____

Parent(s) _____ Immediate Supervisor _____

Primary Certificated Supervisor _____ Counselor _____

Coordinator _____

FORM #295 WHITE - District Office YELLOW - Primary Supr. (Cert.) PINK - Counselor GOLDENROD - Student

INDEPENDENT STUDY
MINI-GRANT APPLICATION

SCHOOL_____

I, _____, request the sum of $_____.00
Name of Student Amount

in order to complete the following Independent Study project:

1. Description of Project

2. Materials or Special Needs

a. Description

$_____.00
Amount needed

3. Amount contributed by the student $-_____
Less Student contribution

4. Mini-grant funding $_____
Mini-grant total

Parents Signatures _____

_____

I.S. Sponsor _____
(Certificated staff)

Date Submitted _____

Approved_____

Disapproved_____

_____
Dr. R. Golanty-Koel
Chairperson
Review Committee

WHITE Sheet - District Office
YELLOW Sheet - School

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ANNOUNCING

the formation of the

California Consortium for Independent Study

Services to be provided for members are:

- Directory and description of Independent Study programs currently in operation.
- Materials exchange - clearing house for materials available.
- Curriculum development.
- Media materials available on loan.
- Speaker/Consultant Bureau.
- Information service.
- Annual State Conference -
- Regional Mini-Conferences.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Membership fee for Academic Year $10.00
Indicate type of membership ____ Institutional Affiliation ____ Individual

Contact Name _____

Address _____

_____

_____ Telephone _____
(area code)

School District or Organization Affiliation _____

_____ Position _____

Brief Description of your Independent Study Program or your interest in Independent Study _____

_____

_____

Suggestions for C.C.I.S. Program and support services _____

_____

_____

Make checks payable to: C.C.I.S.

Detach lower portion and mail to: C.C.I.S.
367 Civic Drive #7
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

Sponsors:

Wm. Aston,
Coordinator:
Project
Furlough,
Los Angeles
Unified School
District.

Charles Ford,
Coordinator:
Alternative
Education and
Independent
Study Programs,
California Depart-
ment of Education.

Dr. Renee Solanty-
Kosl,
Coordinator:
Independent
Study Program,
San Mateo Union
High School District.

Senator Arlen Gregorio,
Author of Independent
Study Legislation.

Lee Lundberg,
Pupil Personnel
Services:
San Leandro School
District.

Miles Myers,
Administrative
Director:
Bay Area
Writing Project.

Dr. James Slezak,
Superintendent:
Mt. Diablo Unified
School District.

Dr. David Stern,
Professor:
U.C. Berkeley,
School of Education.

Officers:
(1978-1979)

President -
John Harter

Vice President -
Mary Beth Wolford

Secretary -
Bev Cullen